

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of controlling a blasting network ~~which includes~~esing an assembly of detonators, said blasting network being in a blasting system which further includes a control unit and a communication link for transmitting messages between the control unit and the assembly of detonators, said messages consisting of safe and unsafe messages, said method including the steps of designating at least one unsafe message as unsafe, placing [a] the communication link ~~between a control unit and the network~~ in a control mode in which the communication link is monitored for the designated at least one unsafe message, in said control mode preventing the designated at least one unsafe message, ~~when detected~~, from reaching the assembly of detonators, and placing the communication link in an operational mode in which ~~any previously the designated~~ at least one unsafe message is allowed to reach the assembly of detonators, and wherein in both the control mode and the operational mode ~~any the safe messages which has not been designated as unsafe is~~ are permitted to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link.
2. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein in the control mode of the communication link the or each unsafe message is prevented from reaching the assembly of detonators by preventing the onward transmission of the unsafe message.
3. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 1 wherein in the control mode of the communication link the or each unsafe message is prevented from reaching the assembly of detonators by scrambling the or each designated unsafe message so that it is no longer unsafe.

4. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 3 which includes, in the operational mode of the communication link, the steps of detecting a scrambled unsafe message, unscrambling the detected scrambled unsafe message, and transmitting the unscrambled unsafe message to the assembly of detonators.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 which includes the step of designating at least two unsafe messages.

6. (currently amended) A method of controlling a blasting network ~~which includes~~ing an assembly of detonators, said blasting network being in a blasting system which further includes a control unit and a communication link for transmitting messages between the control unit and the assembly of detonators, said messages consisting of safe and unsafe messages, said method including the steps of designating two ~~unsafe~~ messages as unsafe, placing [a] the communication link ~~between a control unit and the network~~ in a control mode in which the communication link is monitored for the designated unsafe messages, in said control mode preventing the designated unsafe messages[, ~~when detected[,]~~] from reaching the assembly of detonators, and placing the communication link in an operational mode in which ~~any previously the~~ designated unsafe messages is/are allowed to reach the assembly of detonators, wherein in both the control mode and the operational mode ~~any the safe messages which has not been designated as unsafe is~~ are permitted to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link, and wherein the two designated unsafe messages are respectively equated with arm and fire commands.

7. (currently amended) A system for controlling a blasting network ~~which includes~~ing an assembly of detonators, said system including a control unit, ~~and a communication link for the network~~ transmitting messages between the control unit and the assembly of detonators, said messages consisting of safe messages and at least one designated unsafe message, the communication link being capable of being placed in a control mode and in an operational mode, and a monitoring device for monitoring the communication link for the at least one ~~previously~~ designated unsafe message,

wherein the communication link in its control mode prevents ~~any detected~~ the at least one designated unsafe message from being transmitted to the assembly of detonators and in its operational mode permits ~~any previously~~ the at least one designated unsafe message to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators, and wherein in both its control mode and its operational mode the communication link permits ~~any~~ the safe messages ~~which has not been designated as unsafe~~ to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link.

8. (currently amended) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 7 wherein in the control mode of the communication link the onward transmission of the ~~or each~~ at least one designated unsafe message[,] ~~when detected[,]~~ is prevented.

9. (withdrawn) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 7 wherein the ~~or each~~ at least one designated unsafe message, when detected, is scrambled.

10. (withdrawn) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 9 wherein in the operational mode of the communication link ~~any~~ the scrambled at least one designated unsafe message is detected and unscrambled for transmission of the unscrambled at least one designated unsafe message to the assembly of detonators.

11. (previously presented) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 7 wherein the control unit is capable of generating legal unsafe messages, which are transmitted via the communication link in its operational mode.

12. (previously presented) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 7 wherein the monitoring device is a filter.

13. (currently amended) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim [7] 20 wherein the communication link is placed in its control and operational modes by means of a switch.

14. (previously presented) A blasting system including a system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 7 connected to a blasting network including an assembly of detonators.

15. (previously presented) A blasting system according to claim 14 wherein the control unit of the system for controlling a blasting network is capable of generating legal unsafe messages, which are transmitted via the communication link in its operational mode.

16. (previously presented) A blasting system according to claim 14 wherein the monitoring device of the system for controlling a blasting network is a filter.

17. (currently amended) A blasting system according to claim [14] 22 wherein the communication link of the system for controlling a blasting network is placed in its control and operational modes by means of a switch.

18. (new) A method of controlling a blasting network including an assembly of detonators, said blasting network being in a blasting system which further includes a control unit and a communication link for transmitting messages between the control unit and the assembly of detonators, said messages consisting of safe and unsafe messages, said method including the steps of designating at least one message as unsafe, placing the communication link in a control mode in which the communication link is monitored for the designated at least one unsafe message, in said control mode preventing the designated at least one unsafe message from reaching the assembly of detonators, and placing the communication link in an operational mode in which the designated at least one unsafe message is allowed to reach the assembly of detonators, and wherein in both the control mode and the operational mode the safe messages are permitted to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link, wherein a locking device is used to place the communication link in its control mode or operational mode.

19. (new) A method of controlling a blasting network including an assembly of detonators, said blasting network being in a blasting system which further includes a control unit and a communication link for transmitting messages between the control unit and the assembly of detonators, said messages consisting of safe and unsafe messages, said method including the steps of designating at least one message as unsafe, placing the communication link in a control mode in which the communication link is monitored for the designated at least one unsafe message, in said control mode preventing the designated at least one unsafe message from reaching the assembly of detonators, and placing the communication link in an operational mode in which the designated at least one unsafe message is allowed to reach the assembly of detonators, and wherein in both the control mode and the operational mode the safe messages are permitted to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link, wherein the control unit is connected to an Internet or Intranet facility or connection arrangement.

20. (new) A system for controlling a blasting network including an assembly of detonators, said system including a control unit, a communication link for transmitting messages between the control unit and the assembly of detonators, said messages consisting of safe messages and at least one designated unsafe message, the communication link being capable of being placed in a control mode and in an operational mode, a monitoring device for monitoring the communication link for the at least one designated unsafe message and a locking device for placing the communication link in its control mode or operational mode, wherein the communication link in its control mode prevents the at least one designated unsafe message from being transmitted to the assembly of detonators and in its operational mode permits the at least one designated unsafe message to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators, and wherein in both its control mode and its operational mode the communication link permits the safe messages to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link.

21. (new) A system for controlling a blasting network including an assembly of detonators, said system including a control unit, the control unit being connected to an

Internet or Intranet facility or connection arrangement, a communication link for transmitting messages between the control unit and the assembly of detonators, said messages consisting of safe messages and at least one designated unsafe message, the communication link being capable of being placed in a control mode and in an operational mode, and a monitoring device for monitoring the communication link for the at least one designated unsafe message, wherein the communication link in its control mode prevents the at least one designated unsafe message from being transmitted to the assembly of detonators and in its operational mode permits the at least one designated unsafe message to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators, and wherein in both its control mode and its operational mode the communication link permits the safe messages to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link.

22. (new) A blasting system including a system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 20 connected to a blasting network including an assembly of detonators.

23. (new) A blasting system including a system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 21 connected to a blasting network including an assembly of detonators.